CAREERS IN BLIND WELFARE

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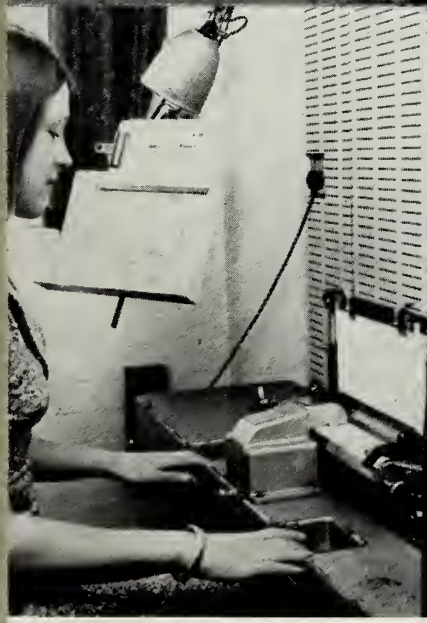

L NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND RNIB

EAT PORTLAND STREET, LONDON W1N 6AA

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Top Left: *A Mobility Officer gives instruction in the Long Cane Technique to a newly blind resident at the RNIB Rehabilitation Centre, Torquay.*

Top Right: *Helping blind people in daily living skills is an important section of the courses for Technical Work with Blind and Partially Sighted People, conducted by the Southern and North Regional Associations for the Blind.*

Lower Left: *Sighted operators for braille transcribing machines are always in demand, and the Institute offers training in this interesting and helpful work.*

Lower Centre: *Child care staff play a vital part in the training and development of blind children.*

Lower Right: *Teaching in schools for the blind calls for specialised training, and applicants should already be qualified teachers experienced in teaching sighted children.*

CAREERS IN BLIND WELFARE

For those who feel they have the aptitude to work with, and for, people less fortunate than themselves, there can be few more satisfying opportunities than those offered in welfare services available to blind people.

There are in Britain today some 118,000 blind persons of all ages on the registers of Local Authorities, and each year this figure increases, especially amongst the elderly. These men, women and children constitute a true cross-section of the community as a whole, with widely divergent tastes, ambitions, hopes and intellects. Above all, they need help and understanding to achieve a measure of independence relative to their individual abilities.

Because Britain has developed over many years the most comprehensive pattern of welfare for blind people of any country in the world, the attainment of this aim is, for the majority, made possible by a unique integration of effort between Government Departments, Local Authorities and voluntary organisations for the blind, each playing their vital, individual role to this common end.

By the provision of schools, training centres, homes and hostels; by the maintenance of a host of intimate, friendly, local services and of many operated on a national scale, we in this country ensure that blind people among us suffer a minimum of handicap from their lack of sight.

This is work of true humanity, and those with a sincere interest in welfare work can undertake it with success, and will find in its advancement the personal satisfaction they desire.

For those anxious to learn how best their individual qualifications and abilities may be utilised to ease the burden which blindness inevitably imposes, the Royal National Institute for the Blind has compiled the following notes concerning opportunities at the Institute, some of which are equally relevant to other organisations serving the blind, and will be pleased to hear from those who feel qualified and anxious to help.

REHABILITATION CENTRES

The Institute's Rehabilitation Centres for the Newly Blind at Torquay and at Nottingham occasionally require experienced instructors for teaching newly blind people the many skills they will need for a new way of life.

Possession of the Inter-Regional Certificate for Technical Work with Blind and Partially-Sighted People, and/or the Certificate of the Council for Training Social Workers, are desirable qualifications. (See inside back page of this brochure for course details).

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

Since 1966, when the first evaluations of the long cane technique were carried out in this country, an ever-increasing number of blind people have enjoyed greater freedom, independence and mobility, following specialised training in mobility skills, including the long cane.

A Training Centre for sighted Mobility Officers for the Blind, in Birmingham, trains suitable applicants to work in this rewarding field of blind welfare in Local Authority areas. School teachers who wish to acquire specialised knowledge, both practical and theoretical, of mobility training for use in schools for the blind, are eligible for training.

The Centre is conducted by the Royal National Institute for the Blind on behalf of a consortium formed by the R.N.I.B., St. Dunstan's and the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind.

Applicants for these courses should be between 21 and 45 years of age, sighted, and have obtained five G.C.E. subjects at "O" Level. Candidates are expected to undergo physical and audio-metric examinations and should normally possess a driving licence.

Local Authorities, who are urged to sponsor applicants for these Courses, would be responsible for costs in relation to Tuition Fee, Accommodation and a Training or Salary Allowance to candidates they sponsor for the Course.

Enquiries can be made direct to the Centre at the following address: The Principal, National Mobility Centre, 22 Melville Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham 16.

SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

Teachers

Applicants must have completed one of the recognised courses leading to qualification as a teacher, and should preferably have gained experience in teaching sighted children before seeking appointment in schools for the blind.

They are normally required either to take the Diploma of the College of Teachers of the Blind within three years of appointment at a school for the blind, or to have attended the full-time one-year course at Birmingham University before taking up the appointment.

Child Care Staff

All schools for the blind are boarding schools, though some accept day pupils, and the Child Care Staff concerned with the "home life" of the children play a vital part in their training and development.

The duties of individual appointments tend to vary from school to school, but the staff are mainly designated Housemothers, Assistant Housemothers or Junior Assistants.

In all cases relevant experience or appropriate training is desirable, N.N.E.B. (Nursery Nurses Examination Board), or one of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, courses. There is no special preliminary training for work with blind children; at one of the R.N.I.B. schools there is a full "in-service" training scheme, although it does not yet qualify for the National Certificate of Attendance.

A limited number of untrained nursery and schoolroom assistants are employed, most of whom will go on to further training. Vacancies occasionally occur for Matrons, trained nurses, housekeepers and school secretaries.

In the Sunshine Home Nursery Schools and the two Schools for Additionally Handicapped Blind Children administered by the R.N.I.B., there are exceptional opportunities for rewarding and interesting work with children.

HOMES, HOSTELS AND HOLIDAY HOTELS FOR THE BLIND

The Institute's Homes for blind and deaf-blind people present opportunities for men and women interested in the care of the adult blind to work as Assistant Wardens, General Assistants and within the nursing grades. Vacancies for Matrons and Wardens of Homes, Managers and Manageresses of Hotels, do occasionally arise, and at such times consideration is always given to the possibility of promoting existing staff.

Potential Assistant Wardens and Assistant Manageresses should possess some experience of catering and household management, a knowledge of home nursing and the ability to take responsibility and supervise domestic staff.

The duties of a General Assistant do not demand previous experience, but require all-round adaptability.

At some of the Homes, State Registered and State-Enrolled Nurses are employed.

The increasing number of elderly infirm people coming within the Institute's care has created a considerable demand for Nursing Attendants, both male and female. They need not be trained but should preferably possess some previous experience of home nursing.

The teaching of handicrafts at the R.N.I.B. residential Homes demands previous experience in this work and offers opportunities for full or part-time employment, according to the requirements of the individual Homes.

Sighted guides are also employed in the Holiday Hotels from May to October to assist blind guests to benefit to the full from their holiday period. These are non-residential posts.

In all these openings, previous experience of blind people and their requirements is not an essential qualification. What is vitally necessary, though, is a sincere and sympathetic understanding of elderly handicapped men and women.

At the R.N.I.B. hostels within the London area, which accommodate blind workers and students, openings from time to time occur for Assistant Wardens who prefer to work within a younger age-group.

COMMERCIAL TRAINING

The Institute maintains its own College, in London, for training blind men and women in the Commercial skills of typing, audio and shorthand dictation and telephone switchboard operating. From time to time vacancies occur for sighted instructors in these fields and qualified applicants should apply to the R.N.I.B.

DOMESTIC STAFF

All the foregoing establishments employ domestic and house staff, and are always glad to hear of people interested in residential posts.

BRAILLE PRODUCTION

To meet an ever-increasing demand for braille books, magazines and periodicals, the R.N.I.B. offers from time to time appointments in its Publications Department, *e.g.* transcribing machine operators, and proof readers, for which training is given.

An increasing amount of production involves the use of a computer, and there are occasional vacancies for key punch operators in the computer unit.

STUDENTS' BRAILLE LIBRARY

The R.N.I.B. also serves blind students and professional people through its Students' Library and Manuscript Department, and expert braillists with specialised knowledge of language and mathematics are needed to provide examination papers and a variety of other material.

It is not expected that sighted applicants for braille positions will have a knowledge of braille, and therefore training is provided by the Institute.

Voluntary braille transcribers, working from their own homes, for the R.N.I.B. Students' Library need good academic qualifications, and must be able to give a minimum of two hours per day regularly. Languages or mathematics are particularly useful. Further details can be obtained from the Head of the Students' Library.

STUDENTS' TAPE LIBRARY

Voluntary help is always required from those suitably qualified, to record on tape in their own homes, specialised material required by blind students.

OFFICE WORK

At the Headquarters of the Royal National Institute for the Blind in London, and at its Branch Offices in various parts of the country, opportunities arise for men and women as administrative officers, appeals personnel, secretaries, shorthand-typists, clerk-typists, copy-typists and in other posts.

COURSES FOR TECHNICAL WORK WITH BLIND AND PARTIALLY-SIGHTED PEOPLE

Courses, of six months' duration, are available through the following Regional Associations for the Blind, to provide tuition in communication and daily living skills for blind and partially-sighted people. Whilst such courses are primarily intended for those already experienced in Social Welfare work, applications will also be considered from people between the ages of 20 and 50 who feel personally motivated to this type of work.

On the satisfactory conclusion of the Course, students will be awarded the Inter-Regional Certificate for Technical work with Blind and Partially-Sighted People, which will be of help when applying for posts in Social Services Departments of Local Authorities, Rehabilitation Centres, Residential Homes for blind and deaf-blind people and the Day Centres conducted by many Local Authorities and Voluntary Organisations for blind people.

The Southern Regional Association for the Blind,
32 Old Queen Street, London, SW1H 9HP.

The North Regional Association for the Blind,
Headingley Castle, Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2DQ.

(A prospectus will be sent on request).

The Southern Regional Association for the Blind also conducts a three-month course for qualified Social Workers, who wish to specialise in work with blind people.

VOLUNTARY WORK

Those wishing to give their services in a voluntary capacity, either on a full-time, part-time, regular or occasional basis, may discover in blind welfare a wide field of opportunity. Offers of help in clerical, nursing or domestic duties, in appeals work and in driving or escorting blind people to their destinations are always appreciated.

Further information may be obtained from

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
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the helping hand to all Britain's blind

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